

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY OF THAXTED PARISH HELD ON
THURSDAY 22th March 2023 AT 7:30 PM IN THE DAY CENTRE**

Present:

Councillors: Andy Frater (Chairman) Alison Howells (Vice Chairman), Victoria Knight, Terry Frostick, Paul Flint, Jenna Perkins, Nick Weakley, Cllr Ray Williams

Also present: D Oxley (Clerk & RFO)
District & County Cllr Martin Foley
District Cllr Mike Taylor (running late)
48 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Jon Spencer
Michael Culkin
Antoinette Wattebot

2. To receive and approve as a correct record, the minutes of the last Annual Parish Assembly held on 22nd March 2018

Resolved to Approve the minutes of the last annual parish meeting held on 22nd March 2022, having been circulated, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Talks from Uttlesford Foodbank

Desiree Ashton - Advocacy & Campaigns Officer from Uttlesford Foodbank gave an enlightening presentation – this is an extract of the detail contained within:

Uttlesford Foodbank have 2 paid staff with a team of over 90 volunteers doing 800 hours per month, 80% of the residents live in rural settlements, pre pandemic we delivered 600 food parcels through the year since the pandemic this increased to 1200, now we are on target to delivering 1500 this year. 56% of people who visit a food bank are on Universal credit, 60% are living with disability, in UDC 3270 people are living in low income households, 7 in 10 of the children living in poverty are living in working families.

When you look at the Thaxted & the Eastons figures, 41 food parcels, 3% of total demand, 120 individuals with 50% being children. Child poverty is high in Thaxted and the Eastons when compared with other UDC wards. The age range is also tracked, poverty has a big impact on opportunities therefore schools are a great source of engagement. In July 2022 and Nov 2022 there was a government payment to some families and the Graph presented shows clearly that those who received this benefit spent the funds on much needed food and heating.

To access our food bank, this is accessed through referrals, such as GP, Citizen advice Bureau (CAB) and others. There are billions of £ worth of benefits that go unclaimed in this country each year so we would really encourage people to seek advice from the CAB. As a community, signposting is essential, for example: CAB, Healthy Start which is a scheme for pregnant people to support with fruit veg baby milk, home start, and UDC children clothing bank (which is self explanatory) the Essex holiday clubs, Uttlesford front line, essential living fund is available through ECC for essential white goods (Kitchen appliances), community action network and the UDC benefits team who are a fantastic friendly and really informed bunch, and finally, last but not least, the foodbank.

Cllr Taylor asks if there is a one size fits all approach for schools feeding children?

Sadly there isn't, there are many different options available, Cllr Foley speaks in favour of the Tussle trust and the difference this can make to individuals and families.

Much debate followed and some sobering figures were shown, Cllr frater thanks Des for all her support and the teams hard work in doing their best to support those in need locally.

4. Updates from the Thaxted Community Land Trust

For those of you that don't know I'm Terry Frostick and though I am here as a long-standing Parish Councillor, I have been invited tonight, to talk to you as Chairman of the Thaxted Community Land Trust.

Chairman Signature

The Trust was formed by the Parish Council as a result of the housing needs identified in the neighbourhood plan. Community Land Trusts are a way of giving people the means to steward land for local well-being and to develop and manage homes and other assets important to their local community. The number of CLTs has been growing rapidly over the last decade and Thaxted Community Land Trust is the first of its kind in Uttlesford. Our aim as a trust is to provide small scale, affordable homes for the people in our community.

The issue of affordability in this area continues to be one of our driving factors. At the time of writing this speech there was only one property in Thaxted available for private rent. A 3 bedroom property listed at £2000 per month. There are no 1 or 2 bedroom properties currently up for rental in the area, despite this need being clearly identified in the Housing Needs Survey.

Similarly, last year's UDC Housing Survey found that the cheapest two-bedroom house for purchase was £289,284 within the Saffron Walden Castle ward and the most expensive was £443,000 in the Thaxted and Eastons. The average price of a two-bedroom house at that point was £361,766. These figures are clearly pricing a lot of people out of both buying and privately renting in our town, and so the objectives of the trust remain paramount.

With all of this in mind, we are moving forward with plans for a small first development off Bardfield Rd which will provide an initial 4 dwellings for residents in Thaxted. This was a piece of land identified in the Neighbourhood Plan as suitable for development. We have now drawn up a lease with the Parish Council for this land, and formed a working partnership with English Rural to help us in delivering this first scheme. The scheme will also include a net-zero green space for community use, and we hope to include Eco-Thaxted in this part of the project.

We are working really hard to remain representative of Thaxted's needs, and to ensure we are not just viewed as another form of developer as this is not the purpose of a Land Trust at all. We are very specific in our aims and objectives and we welcome and encourage engagement from all sectors of the community. We are really excited about the possibilities this will present us with as we move forward with the project.

However, to continue doing this we do need to consolidate the Board and we would now really like to recruit some new members with varying skill sets which will drive this project forward.

If you'd like to know more about the project and the other work we are doing in the community, then please come and have a chat with me tonight. You can also contact us via our social media pages and we will get back to you. The success of this trust is going to be largely dependent on the amazing contribution Thaxted Residents are making to this cause and we are very excited to welcome some new faces!

Thank you for your time tonight and we do hope to hear from some of you soon.

Audience members commented on the need for such a scheme and welcomed the fact that this would be for Thaxted Residents, others commented on how expensive it was to live in Thaxted.

Cllr Frater Thanked the CLT for all the work in diligently pulling together this project, and remarked how collaborative this has been with the work of the Clerk and Council members. We are looking forward to seeing the first signs of the Build

5. To receive questions from residents relating to matters connected to or affecting the parish of Thaxted

Q1)

Dear Dena,

Would it be possible to post a question to The Parish Council, to be raised at the upcoming Annual Thaxted Parish Assembly?

Question: Is Thaxted Parish Council aware of the upcoming Appeal in respect to the Cutler's Green Solar Farm? The Developer, Low Carbon, have formally notified of their intention to appeal the refusal decision. Will the Parish Council apply for Rule 6 status?

Chairman Signature

Many thanks for your continued support.

Response) he first part of the question is a yes, The Parish Council is aware, it is the intention of the Parish Council to bring to our upcoming April meeting the Rule 6 status, in summary this would give us more authority in connection to planning matters. To put this in to context Cllr Frater asked both Cllr Knight and Richard Haynes to expand on what Rule 6 is and the impact and influence this would have over this planning matter

Q2)

I hope you are well.

I am unable to attend the meeting on Tuesday but I wondered if it is still possible to ask questions remotely?

I am very concerned that the Wedow Road/Elers Way planning proposal was granted planning permission. However at the council meeting it was stated that residents would be involved in the construction management plan. Is this happening? Who is involved? Who are we dealing with at Vistry homes?

There have been articles in the press last week about Vistry Homes felling trees in Wellingborough, behind the councils back. It is another site with tricky access, like the site at the top of Wedow Road. How do we know what they are planning to do? I have fears for Walnut Tree Meadow on top of the flooding and traffic congestion issues.

Here is a link to the article

<https://www.northantslive.news/news/northamptonshire-news/felling-iconic-trees-set-begin-8175907>

Is there anything else we can do? Is this really now a done deal?

Response) We put up a robust objection to this development, however outline planning permission has been given and the director of UDC Dean Hermitage who promised to provide us with input the S106 agreement. The Chairman and the Clerk have written 4 times to Dean however to date have had no response, but we wont give up. We wish to talk to them in greater detail. Much debate followed in connection to the current workings of UDC Planning. Tanyard and Margaret street are pinch points and the planning authority seem not to be aware, Cllr Frater and Foley walked this area with the Authorities and have been shown this area as a major concern.

Q3)

Good evening Dena

Regrettably I am unable to attend the APM next Tuesday, but I have a question.

We live in Mill End and have noticed an increase in speeding traffic over the last few years from HGVs and antisocial behaviour by motor vehicles, both in terms of excessive speed and noise. What can the parish council do to facilitate mitigating this problem.

The closure of Armitage bridge was a welcome relief from HGVs.

The use of s59 sanctions would help with the antisocial behaviour of cars and motor cycles

Is it possible to resurrect Speed Watch and noise monitoring.

I, for one, am willing to help.

Regards

Response) This question was directed to EC Martin Foley

We put down speed wires which gives us average speeds however that was a while ago and we shall check this again, there's a piece of work that's on the table to reduce speed in Thaxted to 20MPH and also some evidence to suggest that parking on the road in sensitive areas reduces speed. There's going to be a mini roundabout situated at the bottom of Bardfield road which we hope will help the speeding. What is the criteria used by highways to decide whether you can have a 20 MPH speed limit?

Meeting Closed 20:51

Chairman Signature